

STORY 54.

VIRTUE MUST HAVE PRECEDENCE OF WORLDLY GREATNESS.

DURING the Khilafat of (Hazrat) Omar some chiefs of the Koresh came to see him. It so happened that just then some freed slaves were waiting for audience. Their position may be judged from the fact that they were freed slaves, and according to the ancient Arab usage they could not claim equality with, much less precedence of the haughty Koresh Aristocrats.

But to their surprise the Arab chiefs saw that the Khalifa granted audience to the slaves first. Abu Sufyan who was the premier chief of his tribe took this as an insult and said "It is a strange irony of fate that slaves get precedence of us, while we are left waiting." But one more discerning than the rest remarked "These slaves were before us in accepting Islam therefore they are entitled the precedence here too. The Khalifa treats us according to our deserts."

STORY 55.

HOW A MUSLIM RULER SHARES IN THE SUFFERINGS OF HIS PEOPLE.

IN a famine mostly the poor suffer. The well-to-do are very little affected, and their luxury continues as usual. Islam does not tolerate this inequality as the following story shows.

Once in the time of (Hazrat) Omar there was a severe famine in Medina, so that no milk or butter could be had in the market. Upon this (Hazrat) Omar gave up the use of these things entirely, until these articles were available for all people as before. One day a consignment of milk and butter came into the market. A slave of (Hazrat) Omar bought up the whole lot, and the other people went away disappointed. When (Hazrat) Omar was informed of this he called the slave before him, censured him severely for this callous indifference to the needs of the people, and said to him, "Go, and distribute this milk and butter among all the people. I must share in the sufferings of my people."